

REMARKS

Claim 9 is directed to the embodiment in Fig. 4 and is amended to clarify that the method forms a folded inflatable cushion that includes a packet of parallel pleats comprising a first end pleat, a second end pleat and a series of middle pleats disposed therebetween. Claim 9 is further amended to more particularly point out that the method creates the first end pleat adjacent the securement end, the traversing portion extending from the first end pleat, the second end pleat extending from the traversing portion, the middle pleats extending from the second end pleat to a final middle pleat adjacent the first end pleat, and an end portion extending from the final middle pleat toward the second end pleat, as shown in Fig. 4.

Claim 16 is directed to the embodiment in Fig. 6 and is amended to clarify that the method forms a folded inflatable cushion that includes a packet of parallel pleats comprising a first end pleat, a second end pleat and a series of middle pleats disposed therebetween. Claim 16 is further amended to more particularly point out that the method creates the first end pleat extending from the traversing portion apart from the securement end, the middle pleats extending from the first end pleat to the second end pleat, and an end portion extending from the second end pleat toward the first end pleat, as shown in Fig. 6.

The amendments clarify that the folds originally recited in the claims refer to the parallel pleats that form the packet, as indicated by pleats 46 in the figures, see page 7,

lines 21-23. The amendments thus only make clear that which was originally claimed, and avoid confusion regarding the word “fold.” Thus, the amendments do not add new matter or necessitate further searching. Therefore, it is requested that the amendments be entered. In the even that the amendments are not deemed to place the claims in condition for allowance, it is requested that they be entered nevertheless, if only for purposes of clarifying issues for appeal.

Claim Rejection based upon Asano et al.

Claims 9-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by United States Patent No. 6,371,512, issued to Asano et al. in 2002.

Claim 9 is directed to the embodiment depicted in Fig. 4. In accordance with claim 9, the traversing portion extends between the first end pleat and the second end pleat, and that the middle pleats extend from the second end pleat back to the first end pleat. The rejection points to Fig. 18 in Asano et al. In Asano et al., the first end pleat is not formed before the traversing portion. The rejection points to fold 325B in Asano et al. However, this fold is made in the traversing portion, and does not create an end pleat. Moreover, in Asano et al., the traversing portion is not created to space the first end pleat apart from the second end pleats. Still further, the middle pleats do not extend away from the second end pleat back to the first end pleat. As a result, in Applicants’ invention, the first end pleat is disposed adjacent the roof rail to facilitate the deployment of the end

portion during inflation. Asano et al. relies entirely on the traversing portion adjacent the roof rail in deploying the packet, see Fig. 19. Thus, Asano et al. does not anticipate, or even suggest, Applicants' method in claim 9.

Claims 10-14 are dependent upon claim 9 and so not taught or suggested by Asano et al. at least for the reasons set forth with regard to that claim.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 9-14 based upon Asano et al. be reconsidered and withdrawn, and that the claims be allowed.

Claim Rejection based upon Tanase et al.

Claims 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by United States Patent Application Publication No. US 2001/0006287, by Tanase et al. in 2001.

Claim 16 is understood with reference to Fig. 6. The claim calls for a traversing portion that extends from the securement end to the first end pleat. The rejection points to Fig. 9 in Tanase et al., and more particularly to section 10e as akin to Applicants' traversing portion. However, section 10e is an end pleat. Tanase et al. fails to provide a traversing portion to space the first end pleat apart from the securement. As a result, in Tanase et al., the middle pleats extend away from the securement end, and the second end pleat is remote from the securement end. In contrast, in Applicants' invention, the middle pleats extend toward the securement end, and the second end peat is adjacent the

securement end. By providing a traversing section before the first end pleat, the end portion terminates not at the end of the packet next to the securement end as in Tanase et al., but opposite the securement end, against the heatliner and in position to deploy first during inflation. Tanase et al. does not show these features, and so does not anticipate, or even suggest Applicants' method of folding a cushion in claim 9.

Claims 17-19 are dependent upon claim 16 and so not taught or suggested by Tanase et al. at least for the reasons set forth with regard to that claim.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 16-19 based upon Tanase et al. be reconsidered and withdrawn, and that the claims be allowed.

Claim Rejection based upon Asano et al and Tanabe et al. .

Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over Asano et al. in view of United States Patent No. 6,460,877, issued to Tanabe et al. in .

Claim 15 is dependent upon claim 9. For the reasons set forth above, Asano et al. does not teach or suggest Applicants' invention in claim 9.

Tanabe et al. is applied to show an inflatable cushion folded by a machine. However, Tanabe et al. does not show a cushion that includes a traversing portion between the first end pleat and the second end pleat. Without these features, the references, even if combined, do not point to Applicants' invention in claim 9, or claim

15 dependent thereon.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claim 15 based upon Asano et al. and Tanabe et al. be reconsidered and withdrawn, and that the claims be allowed.

Conclusion

For the reasons herein, it is believed that all grounds of rejection of the claims have been addressed and overcome, and that all claims are in condition for allowance. If it would further prosecution of the application, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned at the phone number provided.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 50-0831.

Respectfully submitted,



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